

SHRINER BUILDING

54-56 EAST MAIN STREET

Facing north onto East Main Street (St. Route 32), the Shriner Building consists of two approximately identical sections built a half-century apart. The older, western section was built about 1875 as a residence for the Gilbert family. (There is much structural evidence in the basement that suggests that the 1875 building was erected on top of a much older structure.) The building had a variety of owners and was once owned by the Taylor Motor Company, which may have built the large garage section to the rear, and possibly the eastern half of the Main Street facade. As it now stands, with its hurly-burly of towers and gables, the Shriner Building is a fine, middle-Maryland interpretation, done in white brick and white shingles, of a Cotswold stone town row. One can almost hear the sheep.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

Carr 912
0704104611

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Short-Gilbert-Yingling Building

AND/OR COMMON

Shriner Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

54-56 East Main Street (MD 32)

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

7

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Carroll

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC
☐ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☒ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mayor and Common Council of West.

Telephone #: 848-9000

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Carroll County Office Building

STREET & NUMBER

Center Street

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

STATE

Maryland

Liber #: 586

Folio #: 740

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Facing north on East Main Street (St. Route 32) in Westminster, "The Shriner Building" consists of two, approximately-identical sections built a half-century apart. The building sits on low fieldstone foundations, and produces a mirror-image effect, with a wide through-alley acting as the "mirror".

A photograph taken on July 4, c. 1900, shows the older, western half of the building when it was still used as a private residence. At that time, the house was $2\frac{1}{2}$ stories tall, and 7 bays wide. Dividing the "Shriner Building" into halves is, apparently, a generations-old practice, as the 1900 photograph shows a bulgy building divided in half by a set of enriched double doors on the ground floor (above 3 stone steps), a 3-sided oriel window on the second floor, and a broad, pedimented dormer in the roof. The first and second stories of the original section are, approximately, identical, being 3 bays wide. Two-thirds of each side consist of a two-bay projection. All windows in the white, glazed, stretcher bond brick facade are double-hung sash (with one over one panes), and 4 course gauged flat arches. If the ground and second stories are remarkably similar in appearance, the attic story explodes in a mele of shifting planes, caused by gables of different sizes, chimneys, and towers. The eastern section of the original building has its 2-bay projection entirely topped by a pedimented gable which is pierced by 3, one-over-one windows (the upper pane of which consists of a central pane surrounded by smaller panes, all of colored glass). The section of the gable below the top of these windows is slightly recessed - the unrecessed section is supported by 4 small brackets. The gable is covered, except for the window, by white imbricated shingles. To the west, is a small, one-bay dormer window. The dormer has a single one-over-one window flanked by unfluted pilasters, and surrounded by a pedimented roof. (This like all other windows in the attic story, has its upper sash consisting of a central large pane surrounded by several smaller panes - all in stained glass.) To the extreme west, there is a 4-sided square tower, defined by the 2 planes which make up the north and west walls of the entire building, and having its dimension defined by the distance between the intersection of these two planes and the western edge of the western window, in the western projecting section. The "third story" of the tower is covered with white imbricated shingles, except in the center of its north face which has 3, slit-like 1/1 windows. The roof of the tower has 2 different slopes - at first, all 4 sides slope upwards gradually, and they quickly become steeper, thus adding to the roof's eventual height, which gives great interest to the building's skyline. (Interestingly, this use of 2 different roof pitches was, originally, echoed in the roof of the entire building, as the old photograph reveals.) Both the roof of the tower, and the roof of the rest of the building are sheathed in slate shingles. Rising at the center of the entire building is a broad gable

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | | |

SPECIFIC DATES

c. 1875, c. 1928

BUILDER/ARCHITECT**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

"The Shriner Building" stands out in Westminster, as it would in practically any locality. The house that Gilbert had designed for himself (the western half of the existing building) set the tone which later additions have followed: a chateau-like structure with icy-white, smooth walls on the first and second stories, and, as an interesting contrast, a spiky, vertically-exciting roof line composed of different size gables, turrets and chimneys. The entire building was (and generally still is) carried out in a fine Elsie deWolfe black and white motif. The scheme is given some chromatic excitement by the use of stained glass in the dormers and tower; more recent splashes of color result from the modern and commercial sign of the first floor.

For all these virtues (chromatic simplicity in the colorful business district, involved roof lines, etc.), the building is most effective when viewed in conjunction with St. John's Roman Catholic Church. The spire of the church, when glimpsed from the northeast through the gables of the "Shriner Building", presents a vista that would not be out of place in the west of England. (Of course, it would be even better if the Shriner Building were made of Cotswold stone.) Now that the church is doomed, one wonders about the future effectiveness of Gilbert House and its later addition. It seems likely that Gilbert's architect built mindful of the effect the house would make when visually combined with the church (he'd have been a fool not to); now one wonders what impression the "Shriner Building" will make on the future de-Gothicized Main Street.

The 13,420 square feet that comprise the existing lot consist of several different parcels of land acquired by various owners at various times. On January 9, 1855, Jacob Mathias and wife sold a 110' x 198' parcel to Annie E. Diller, at a cost of \$50 paid to Mathias each year for his natural life (Carroll County Deed Book 24, Page 126). Diller sold the same lot to Joshua J. Short on April 8, 1872 for \$3800 (41/211). Certain (rather difficult to locate) off conveyances were made by Short, but he sold the lot, calling it all of 41/211, and 43/533 on April 1, 1878 to Edward V. Short, for \$2000 (49/319). On May 24, 1892 (75/141) a confirmatory deed between the Shorts was made; the deed was intended (to clarify) 49/319, and it excepts 43/533 from the lot. This was done

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Consisting of 2 lots separated by a 10 foot alley containing, in aggregate, 13,420 square feet, and fronting 78 feet on the south side of East Main Street, and bordered by that street, by Saint John's Roman Catholic Church lot, by the Catholic Cemetery, and by the Westminster Fire Company.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Christopher Weeks, Consultant

February, 1977

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Westminster Historical Sites Survey

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

c/o City Hall - Public Works Department

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Westminster

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

#7

identical in size and treatment to that found over the eastern projection. Originally, a broad chimney rested a few feet in from the building's eastern wall - the chimney is corbel-capped, and might be described as having a Queen Anne design, in that it, like the house (not to imply that the house could be classed as Queen Anne), consists of advancing and receding planes, and corbelling. Eaves treatment is fairly restrained throughout the entire building - a two-part entablature runs the entire distance, over gables and oriels); smaller versions of this, bound the insides of the pediments and the top of the tower.

When the new section was built its designer clearly intended to duplicate, but reversely, the existing, already-described building. He succeeded to a large extent; an assessment of the degree of his success would have to include the near-incredulous reactions of local citizens when they are told that the building is not, in fact, all-of-a-piece. The main, perhaps the only, difference between the two sections is that the newer section is slightly narrower - this is the result of omitting the central door and oriel found on the western section. The eastern section's ground floor, located behind much building activity, consists of modern glass and aluminum store fronts, as does the eastern half of the original section's ground floor today. The building was owned by the Taylor Motor company for a few years; it was perhaps that organization that installed the broad opening that now fills the ground floor of the western section of the addition. This broad door gives access through the building to the large, one-room, brick-walled space that covers the rear of the property.

#8

apparently, to satisfy the new purchaser of the lot, Oscar D. Gilbert who paid Short \$5000 for the property on July 15, 1892 (75/146). Gilbert also bought a strip of land 55' x 2½' from the Archbishop of Baltimore, James Gibbon. Reference in this deed is made to the dwelling house of the late Joshua Short (apparently Short built his building on 2½' of the Church property, an oversight which the Archbishop and Gilbert wished to correct). Gilbert, who owned the building when the rather festive picture was taken, kept title until July 1, 1924 when he and his wife, Julia, sold the land to Anna Reese Boyd (144/228); the metes and bounds description in this deed is identical to the one most recently used, and refers to the lot as containing 13,424 square feet, saying that it is the same as was sold in 75/144, and 75/146. Ms. Boyd sold the lot to John Eubank Hart on Dec. 22, 1926 (148/259), who sold to the Taylor Motor Company on February 18, 1928 (150/187). One might assume that it was the Motor Company which built the brick extension to the south, perhaps as a shop area. The motor company didn't weather the Depression very well, as it defaulted on a \$20,000 note and a trustee, A. Carl Shipley, sold the property back to Ms. Boyd on Jan. 26, 1933 (158/291). La Boyd apparently married a Mr. Simpson, as Anna Boyd Simpson and G. Morgan Simpson sold the lot to George W. Shriner and wife, Hazel, on January 4, 1947 (193/130); Mrs. Shriner sold the building to its present owners on January 31, 1974, in deed 586/740.

1900

1



(House)

1900 Centennial

C-8

9070

CARR 410
"SHRIVER BLOOM"
WESTMINSTER
N. J. 1890
C. W. (C. W. Hist. Soc.)



CARR 410
westminster
"Skinner Bldg."
w facade
2/77 church



CARR 410

"Shriner Bldg."

Westmin, L

Roof detail (H. Jacobs)

2/77 C. Wach



CARR 410

"Shriner Bldg."

westminster

2/77 N. Jacobs ch. Way